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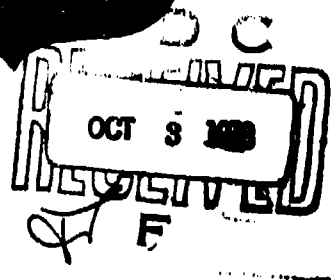
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30 JUNE 1978

STUDY  
PROJECT



UNITED KINGDOM MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN--  
CAPABILITIES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

by

Colonel Alvin M. Bryant, AR  
Lieutenant Colonel Addison C. Ehrlich, INF  
Colonel Horace Mann III, CE

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US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013

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20. ABSTRACT (Continued)

Facilities in Great Britain, Greece and Italy. Economic and political pressures prevent the British from maintaining their current presence in the Mediterranean. The loss of the British bases will not impact greatly on the security of the southern flank of NATO so long as Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus are denied to any other major power (i.e., USSR, PRC). In addition, unless one of our NATO allies is involved the United States will not be able to use any of the aforementioned bases for a unilateral military projection into the mideast.

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⑥ UNITED KINGDOM MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN--  
CAPABILITIES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS.

⑦ GROUP STUDY PROJECT,

by

⑩  
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## PREFACE

This Group Study Project was produced under the aegis of the US Army War College, Department of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations. The scope and general methodology were outlined by the Faculty Advisor in coordination with the Study Group. This research paper is designed to support the US Army War College reference material for future classes as presented by the Military Strategy, Planning and Operations Department. The three authors of the study elected to participate based on their mutual interest in the geographical area and in their effort to learn more about the region. There is insufficient reference material available which specifically addresses this topic, which has caused key military leaders to make erroneous assumptions concerning basing and projection of power in the Mediterranean. This study will aid in allowing correct military assessments to be made in appraisals of the Mediterranean Area.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT . . . . .	11
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. GIBRALTAR. . . . .	6
III. MALTA. . . . .	15
IV. CYPRUS . . . . .	27
V. CONCLUSION . . . . .	37
Recommendations. . . . .	38
DISTRIBUTION . . . . .	40

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The United Kingdom through its extensive system of forward deployments throughout the world has historically provided important strategic bases that facilitated the projection of free world military power. This has been particularly true on the Mediterranean flank of NATO where the United Kingdom's military facilities at Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus (Figure 1) have long provided significant British bases and command and control infrastructures throughout the length of the Mediterranean. Economic problems have begun to seriously limit the British ability to continue worldwide military commitments. Extracts from the 1975 edition of "The Statement On The Defense Estimates," which is published annually by the British Secretary of State for Defense, indicated the actions the British would follow as a result of economic problems. Portions of the publication detail those actions affecting the British military facilities in the Mediterranean.

The government has now taken the basic decision on the Defense Review which are outlined in the following paragraphs. To achieve the economic as well as the military and political objectives of the Review, Britain's defense forces had to be concentrated on those areas in which a British contribution to collective defence would be most effective in ensuring Britain's security and that of her allies. This meant that NATO--the linch pin of British security--should remain the first and overriding charge on the resources available for defence; that our commitments outside the Alliance should be reduced as far as possible to avoid overstretching our forces; and that general purpose forces should be maintained as an insurance against the unforeseen.



# The Mediterranean Basin

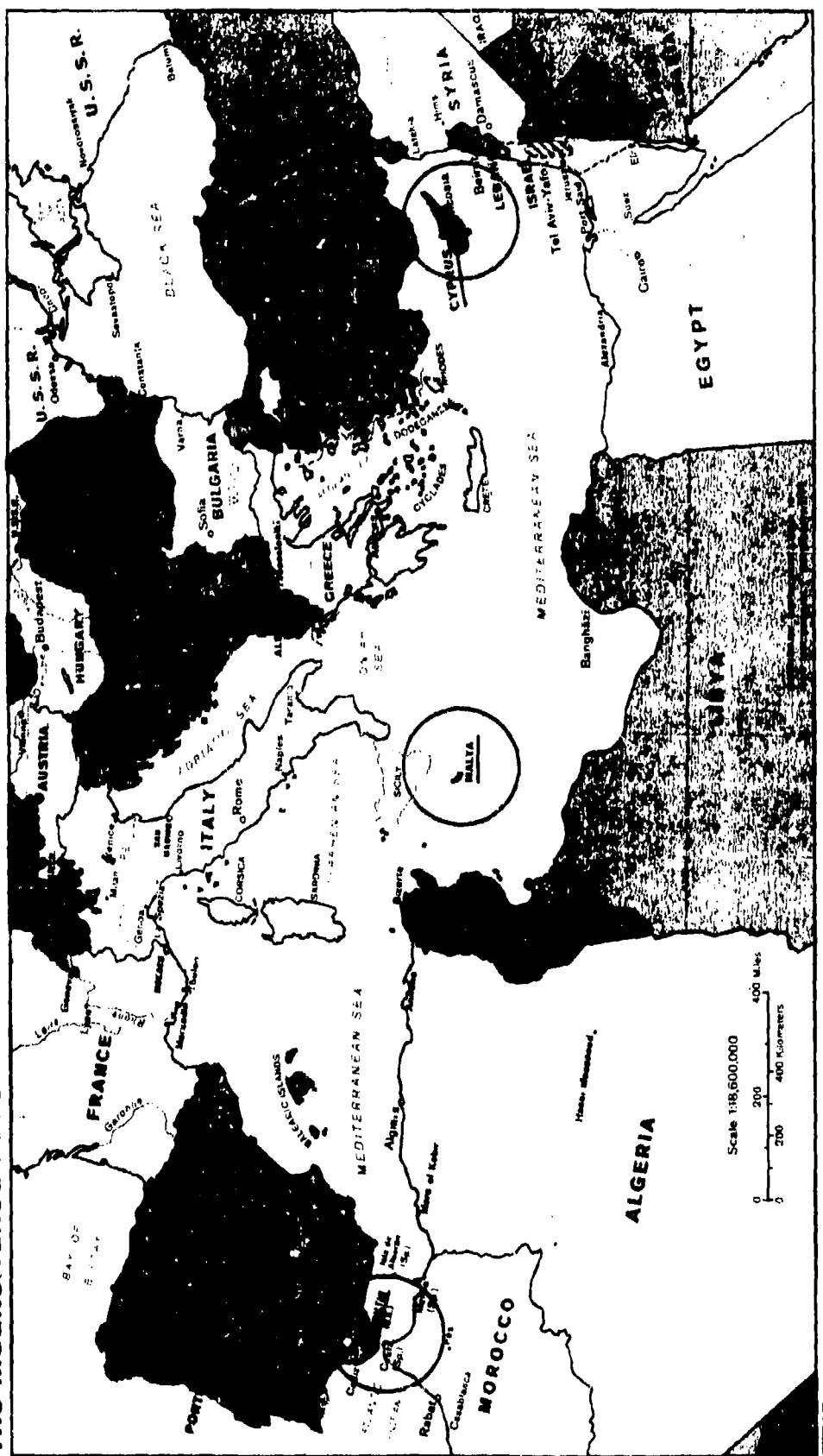


Figure 1

The Government has decided that it cannot, in the future, commit British maritime forces to the Mediterranean in support of NATO. After 1976 no destroyers, frigates or coastal mine-sweepers will be earmarked for assignment to NATO in the area; and between 1977 and 1979 the Royal Air Force Nimrods and Canberras at present committed to NATO there will be withdrawn. In peacetime HM ships will however visit the Mediterranean from time to time and will continue to participate in exercises there with our NATO allies.

In Cyprus we propose to make some early reductions in our forces stationed there. Meanwhile in order to ease the severe accommodation problems that have arisen within the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) since the events of last year, the squadrons of Lightnings and Hercules permanently based on the island, together with the Vulcan strike aircraft stationed there in support of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) have been withdrawn and replaced by smaller numbers of aircraft on detachment from the United Kingdom. For the same reason there will be some reduction in Army personnel.

An illustration which portrays the seriousness of these circumstances is a transparency (Figure 2) currently used in briefings at Headquarters Allied Forces Southern Europe. It displays graphically the bleak reality of how the British extraction from the Mediterranean impacts on the southern flank of NATO. The transparency depicts a twin-headed attack arrow emitting from Russia moving westward; the top or northern arrow proceeds westerly through Poland, East Germany and the Federal Republic of Germany and is labeled as the "MOST DANGEROUS" approach. The bottom or southern arrow proceeds westerly through Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt and is labeled the "MOST LIKELY" approach. It is recognized that cliches relating to strategic situations have been used so much lately that they have become passe'. However, it is appropriate in this circumstance to acknowledge that

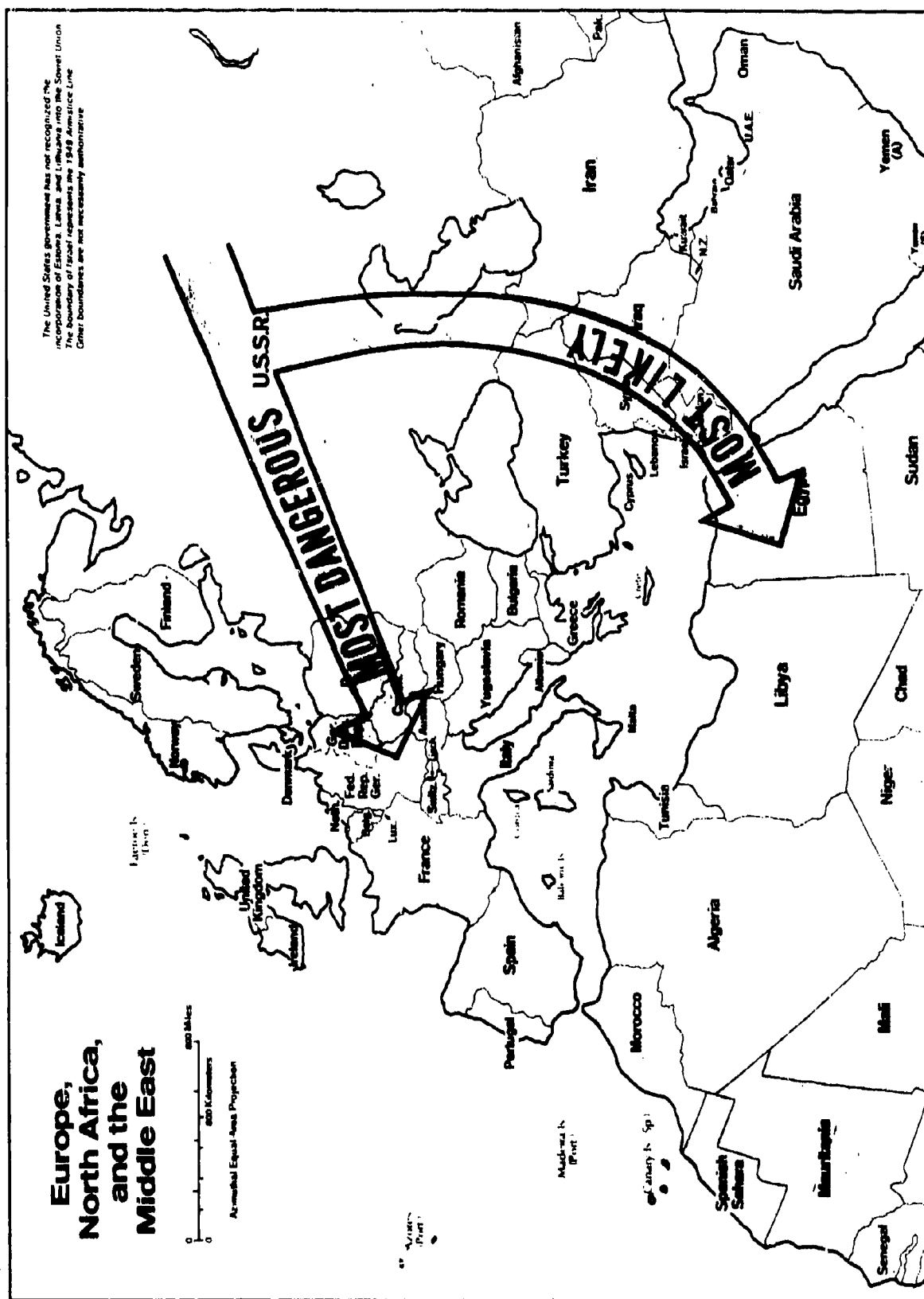


Figure 2

political and economical events have left the soft underbelly of western Europe exposed in the Mediterranean and adversely influenced the ability of the United States and other free world nations to project power into the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

This study addresses the withdrawal and deemphasis of British Forces at Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, the affect it has on the southern flank of NATO and what affect there might be on the future of forward basing privileges for the United States in a military projection into the Middle East. Each base will be addressed separately to include a brief history evolving into today's situation, a discussion of the importance of the strategic position of the base, and the present day political situation and prospects.

## CHAPTER II

### GIBRALTAR

In July 1704, during the war of the Spanish Succession, the combined fleets of Britain and Holland attacked Gibraltar, whose Spanish garrison capitulated and was allowed to withdraw under honorable conditions. British forces remained in occupation until 1713, when the future of Gibraltar was decided by the treaty of Peace and Friendship between Spain and England signed at Utrecht. According to Article Ten of this treaty, the Spanish King did,

Hereby, for Himself, His heirs and successors, yield to the Crown of Great Britain full and propriety of the Town and Castle of Gibraltar, together with the port, fortifications, and forts thereunto belonging; and He gives up the said property to be held and enjoyed absolutely with all manner of right for ever, without any exception or impediment whatsoever.

The terms of the treaty were confirmed by four subsequent treaties concluded over a 50 year period.

Gibraltar is a British Crown Colony, totally self-governing, with the exception of the defense of the colony, which is the responsibility of the British Government. There are approximately thirty thousand citizens living in Gibraltar. Citizens are considered to be those individuals born in Gibraltar prior to 1925 and their descendants; all others must obtain residence permits. The majority of the citizens are a mix of British, Genoese, Maltese, Portuguese and Spanish descent. Their historical heritage is illustrated by the social mixture and culture unique to Gibraltar.

The colony (Figure 3) occupies a narrow peninsula on Spain's southern Mediterranean coast, slightly northeast of the Strait of Gibraltar. It is three miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide, connected to Spain by a low sandy isthmus that is one mile in length. The colony's total area is 2.25 square miles. Since the 18th century it has been a symbol of British naval strength and commonly referred to as the "Rock." Since World War II the British military garrison and naval dockyard have continued to be an important part of Gibraltar's economy, and naval forces of NATO often use the port facilities. Because of the geological setting there is no agriculture; therefore, tourism has developed as one of the main sources of income in addition to the light industry and business derived from reprovisioning ships in the commercial port. Attempts are being initiated to increase and diversify the colony's economy through its improved tourist and commercial port facilities.

The Rock, consisting primarily of limestone and shale ridges, rises nearly straight up from the sandy isthmus on the north side to 1,380 feet and slants upward slightly to 1,396 feet near the southern end. The Rock slants downward to the sea at Europa Point which faces Ceuta in Morocco only 14 miles across the strait on the coast of North Africa.

Great Britain intends to retain sovereignty over the colony. Gibraltarians have indicated their desire to maintain ties with Britain by a referendum which was conducted in 1967. Over 99 percent of the vote was in favor of remaining a British colony. However, Spain claims the right to sovereignty over the colony, insisting that the British

# GIBRALTAR

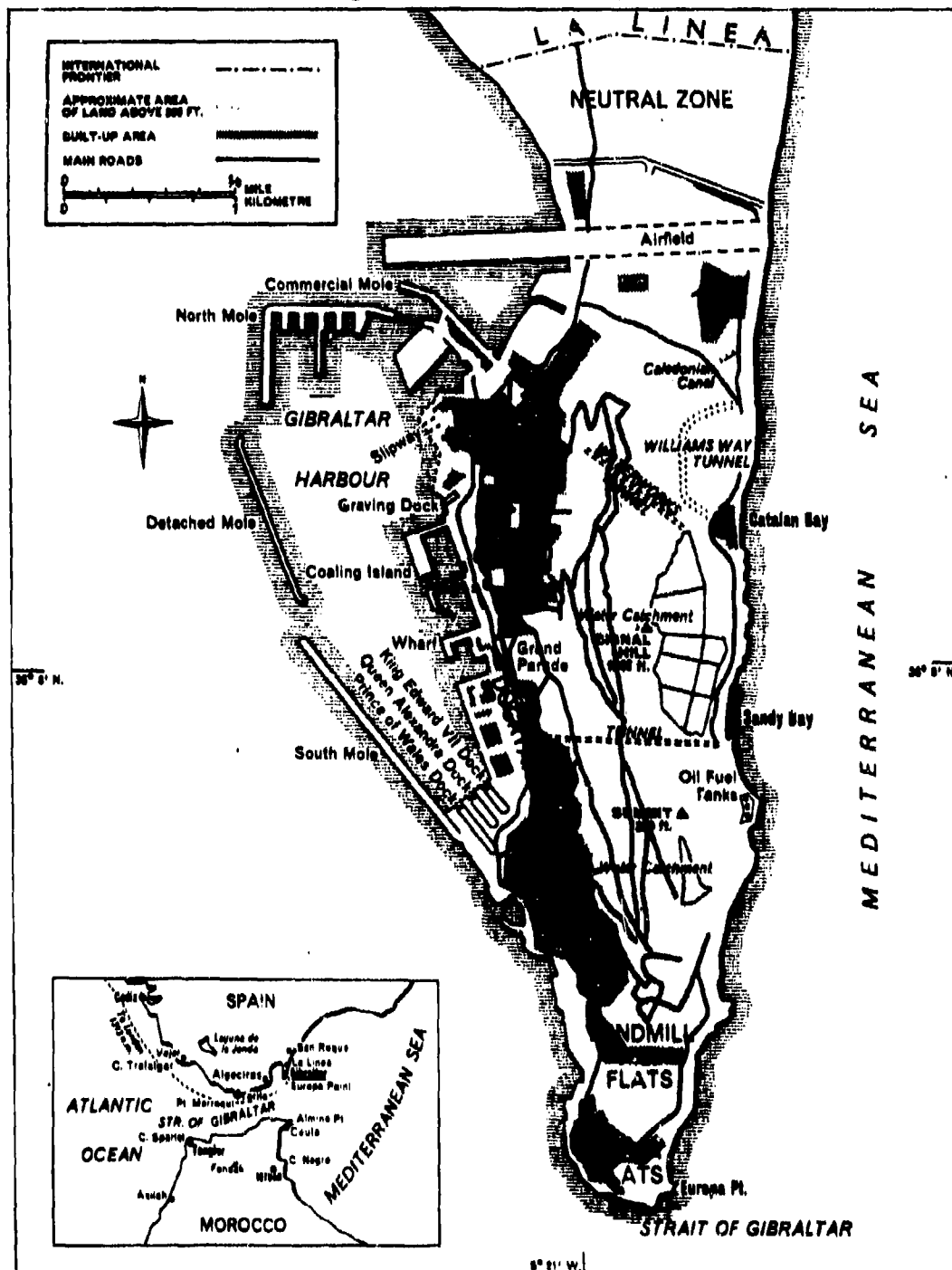


Figure 3

have broken the Treaty of Utrecht. Tensions relative to this situation have been high since the mid-1960s. Great Britain is of the opinion that the legality of British sovereignty is adequately grounded in the Treaty of Utrecht. In addition to the treaty, the British feel that title to Gibraltar is based on the original capture by force of arms, the more than 260 years of uninterrupted occupation by British military forces and the wishes of the citizens of Gibraltar which have been indicated by referendum.

Negotiations on Gibraltar (A New Spanish Red Book) published in 1968 in Madrid is indicative of the Spanish point of view as to why the British should relinquish Gibraltar to Spanish control. The record of the negotiations which began between Spain and Great Britain on the 18th of May 1966 includes these comments made by the Spanish negotiator:

It is a British base obtained not by right of conquest but by usurpation; emptied of its original Spanish population and artificially repopulated with demographic groups having no political entity, who have been merely civilian attendants of the base; menacing and always peremptory in its behaviour towards Spain, from which it has illegally seized territories that have never been British; responsible for the military and economic weakening of the neighbouring area of Spain, in short, a problem which Spain was now offering to solve definitively with a proposal for an Agreement whereby she would recover sovereignty over the Rock while undertaking to protect all legitimate British and Gibraltarian interest that might be involved.

Throughout the 19th century England had been deceitfully encroaching on the isthmus of Gibraltar, with no legal basis, while protesting her respect for the Treaty of Utrecht and without any pretension to be acting under



title of sovereignty; but now she was seeking to consolidate that advance by an unheard-of affirmation of sovereignty which the Spanish Government naturally rejected instantly. It seems reasonable to suppose that the clear and unanswerable Spanish case against the unrightful occupation of the isthmus had brought home to the British Government the extraordinarily precarious nature of the British presence there, maintained in the teeth of all legality. This fact, then, might have been the cause of the brusque assertion of sovereignty made by Great Britain, apparently in an attempt at a hypothetical consolidation of her infringement. Spain's reaction to the British aggression consisted not merely in demanding from Great Britain the recognition of Spanish sovereignty over the isthmus, but also in refusing overflight permission for British military aircraft, as she had already refused it to aircraft of other NATO member countries.

Since the mid 1960s, in a series of moves, the Spanish prohibited Spanish workers from crossing into Gibraltar for their employment, closed the frontier totally, attempted to restrict air and sea traffic, and terminated telephone and telegraphic service to and through Spain. There have been myriads of charges and counter-charges, accusations and denials during the negotiations relating to Gibraltar. As a simple example, the British deny the Spanish charge that Gibraltar is a NATO base. The British have responded during the talks that Gibraltar is clearly and simply a British base and only on specific occasions are NATO allies permitted to utilize it.

The established use of the port for varied commercial purposes is the result of its strategic position, as it is situated at one of the crossroads of the world's shipping routes. The Strait of Gibraltar is a main artery for sea traffic between the Mediterranean and Black Sea area and the Americas. When the Suez Canal is open the

Strait is a main artery for Europe, Africa, India, the Far East and Australia. The town of Gibraltar and the artificial harbor embraced on the north, west and south by moles are on the western side of the Rock. The passenger wharf provides alongside berthing of approximately 800 feet. The northeast portion of the harbor, primarily the north mole and other facilities, provides 5,500 feet of alongside, protected berths.

Gibraltar is a major operational naval base with dockyards capable of making major repairs on large vessels. Bunkering installations for oil, the first in the world to provide metered deliveries at shipside, are available at most berths in addition to water and coal. Oil storage capacity, mainly underground, is about 240,000 tons. Tunneling operations during World War II provided extensive areas for barracks, hospitals, repair shops and storage deep within the Rock, as well as vehicular passages from one side of the peninsula to the other. The North Front Airfield, an asphalt runway 6,000 feet by 150 feet is located on the isthmus just north of the Rock.

The principal settlement, harbor and airfield are located on the side toward the Spanish mainland; therefore, Gibraltar is exposed to ground and air observation. It could easily be bombed from airbases in Spain or Morocco. In a nuclear attack the underground bunkers could serve as fallout shelters, but this might well be the extent of Gibraltar's usefulness in a nuclear war. In a conventional war, Gibraltar could be utilized in the same manner as in the two world wars. Gibraltar is of military value to Britain or her Allies only if Spain or Morocco are friendly, neutral, or too weak to pose a

threat to the Rock. Presently a British battalion of infantry, totalling approximately 300 men is the British Army's contingent on the Rock. The Royal Air Force operates the airfield at Gibraltar and a small detachment of Hunter aircraft is maintained on a rotational basis. A guardship is permanently stationed there.

The real value of Gibraltar in a modern war would be its strategic location for the surveillance and monitoring of the shipping channels between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar. In addition, the location of the base for the surveillance of sub-surface sea traffic through the straits is ideal. At present, however, no sophisticated undersea surveillance equipment is being utilized nor is any readily available. Allegedly the United States offered the British such equipment but the offer was refused on the basis that the British could not afford to place the equipment into an operational status and maintain the operation because of the lack of funds. A surveillance system of this nature would be an immediate requirement in the event of an armed confrontation affecting NATO Forces in the Mediterranean. Mining the straits as an alternative would be extremely difficult, if possible at all, because of the strong currents created in the straits during the tidal changes in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. In addition, the transiting of the area by friendly ships compounds the problem of mining. The lack of British interest in initiating a serious effort to modernize and develop Gibraltar as a modern, strategic choke point is a persistent problem to the NATO staff at NAVSOUTH.

Many varying scenarios can be projected for the future of Gibraltar. The Gibraltar situation could be used as a lever by Spain to influence Spanish entry into NATO. There is a thin thread of evidence to indicate a willingness on the part of the British to vacate Gibraltar under the right circumstances. Unfortunately, it is economic realities that are the strongest contributing factors in this circumstance. For many years the colony at Gibraltar balanced its own budget through revenues produced by custom fees and an income tax. However, since the beginning of the Spanish restrictions Britain has had to provide monetary aid to the Government of Gibraltar, thus placing an additional drain on already lowered British coffers. It is realized that the success encountered in the undersea oil explorations in the North Sea by Britain will eventually mean greatly increased revenues. However, the progress in the oil market has been overshadowed by a lack of progress in other British economic endeavors. "Oil pounds" will be insufficient for the maintenance of extensive worldwide military commitments.

Backers of King Juan Carlos of Spain outnumber opponents by almost two to one and the idea of turning Spain into a republic has very little support now. In fact, the opposition Socialist party has admitted publicly that the party had debated whether they should withdraw their request for a vote in parliament on the continuation of the monarchy. The Juan Carlos government is continuing the pressure initiated by the Franco regime for Britain to relinquish Gibraltar. Therefore, no changes in attitude can be expected from the Spanish government. The uncertainty of the political situation and the

inadequate size of the Gibraltar base make it impractical at present for forward basing of any significant force in the event of a US unilateral projection into the mideast. With British consent the airfield could be available for refueling flights traversing the area. The port could be available to service ocean traffic. However, the available land area is not sufficient for the marshalling of large numbers of troops or the storage of vast amounts of supplies and equipment required of a forward base.

Firm projections on the future of Gibraltar would be impossible at this time. Too many political and economic variables will contribute to the eventual outcome. The most carefully analyzed projection could be totally wrong. The wildest guess could be absolutely right. If Spain did join NATO and if Britain did relinquish title to Gibraltar, an effective Spanish military presence might transform the base into an effective NATO strategic choke point. Only time will tell.

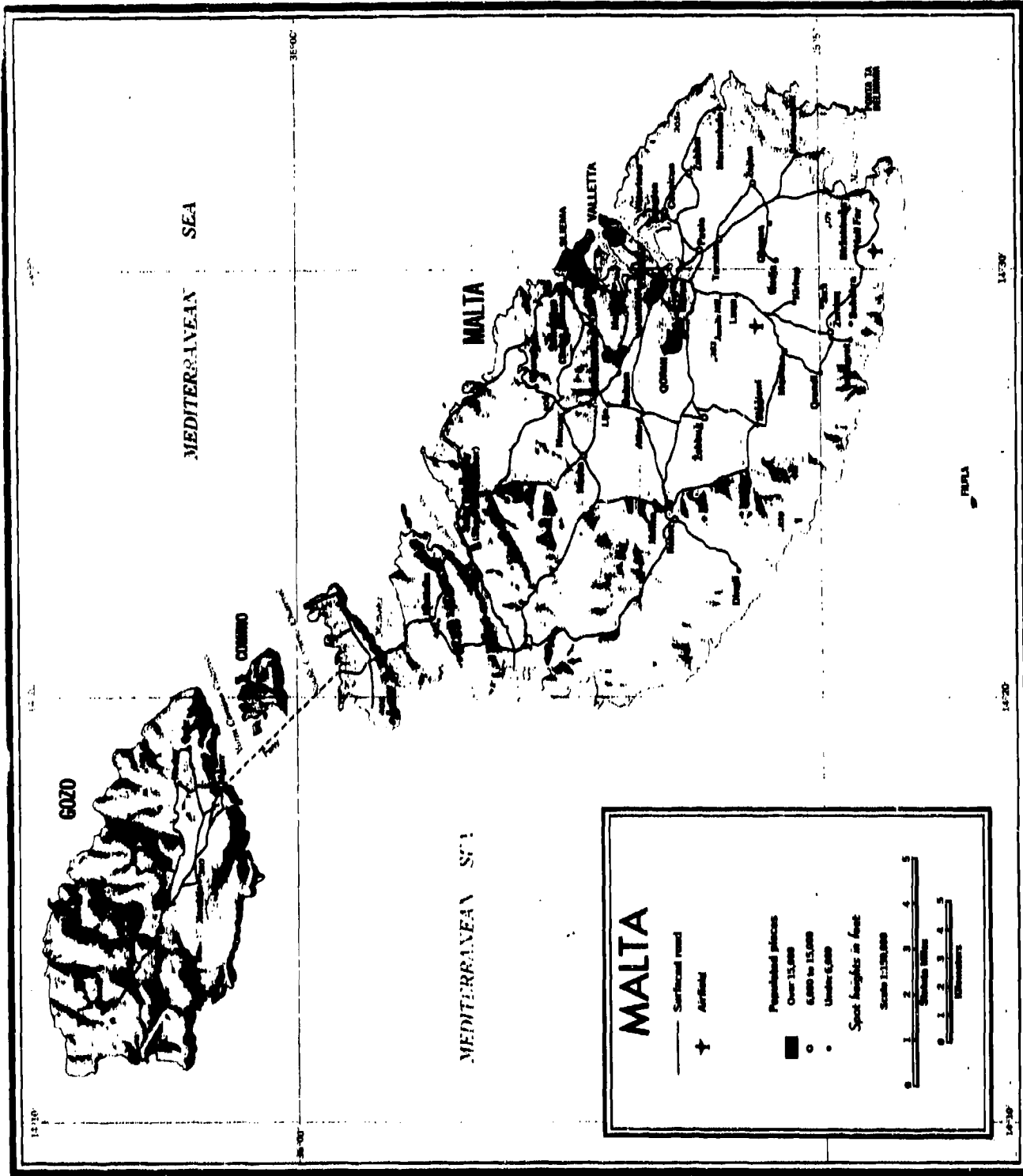
## CHAPTER III

### MALTA

Malta is the largest of five islands located in the central Mediterranean narrows south of Sicily. The group of Maltese Islands are Malta, Gozo, Comino, Cominotto and Filfla, which occupy only 122 square miles. Malta occupies 94.87 square miles; Gozo, 25.89 square miles; and Comino, 1.07 square miles. The other two islands are smaller and uninhabited. Malta extends for a maximum distance of 17 miles from southeast to northwest, with a greatest width of nine miles. There are 85 miles of shoreline. Malta lies 60 miles south of Sicily, with Gibraltar 1,141 miles to the west and Alexandria 944 miles to the east.

Malta (Figure 4) is a low plateau that descends gradually to the plain in the southern part of the island. The plateau is a faulted, tilted and eroded block in the form of a sandwich. At the top and bottom of the geological succession is a hard limestone with softer rocks and blue clay in between. This block has been tilted eastward raising the cliffs on the west about 800 feet and lowering the valleys on the eastern and southern coasts into the Mediterranean, forming deep and safe harbours.

The limestone consists of a thick bed of soft, easily quarried rock which is the principal building stone used on the island. The stone has the advantage of hardening on exposure to the atmosphere, which makes it resistant to weathering. The blue clay is important because it forms the fertile soil for farming; and being impervious,



a large number of springs are found at the junction of this bed with the overlying limestone. These springs are a significant source of the domestic water supply, and are the basis of a zone of irrigation farming, producing excellent fruits and vegetables. However, the soil is not particularly fertile and for the last thousand years there has been a shortage of water. There are no important natural resources on the islands. Clearly, the importance of the Maltese Islands has been their strategic location in the Mediterranean and the deep water ports which are available.

The climate is temperate with summers being hot and dry with almost cloudless skies and winters mild but moist. Rains fall mostly between the months of September and March. Heaviest precipitation occurs from November to January. The driest months are June and July. Annual rainfall fluctuates greatly (10-40 inches) but averages around 20 inches. Winds are of two types: in spring and fall, the "scirocco," a warm, humid southeast wind prevails and during the winter, the "gregale," a cold, Greek wind from the northeast tends to blow. For the remainder of the year the prevailing northwesterly winds stir the air.

The history of the Maltese dates back to about 3800 B.C. with the Phoenicians, followed by the Carthaginians. These were followed by the Romans, Arabs, Normans, Spanish, Italians, French, and the British. The present population of 320,000 is a result of this multiplicity of interacting heritages. Maltese are a distinct ethnic group and their language is somewhat like Arabic, although it incorporates Italian and English. Arabic influence is also evident in the island's architecture, folklore, and proverbs.



In recent Maltese history the two longest and most significant periods of occupation were by the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, 1530-1798 and by the British, 1814-1964. British control was actually sought after by the Maltese. They did not fare well under the French during the 1798-1800 period, which was a result of Napoleon's drive to Egypt. The Maltese were aided by the British in driving out the French. The British then occupied the islands as a British protectorate, the government being first in the hands of a Civil Commissioner and then a Governor. By the Treaty of Paris of 1814, it was determined that the islands were to belong in full right and sovereignty to his Britannic Majesty. This treaty formally severed the connection between Malta and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Over the years Malta had been governed by several sets of guidelines as a Royal Crown Colony. In 1962 the Prime Minister of Malta, in accord with his party's desires, requested of the Secretary of State for the Colonies that Malta be granted independence. As a result, and through detailed negotiations, Malta gained independence on 21 September 1964.

The Royal Navy established itself firmly in Grand Harbor in the 1812-1814 period. The first dry dock was opened in 1848. Military expenditures fluctuated greatly over the years, with large sums spent during war years. Additional docks were opened in 1871, 1892 and 1899. During World War I the naval dockyard employed 10,000 men. During World War II the British realized the value of Malta, especially

in attacking Axis supply ships headed for North Africa. Malta was effectively used throughout the war. The airfields at Ta'Qali and Luqa were opened in 1940 (finished May 1940). The Island proved to be defensible, though high losses were sustained. During the assault on Sicily, 30 squadrons of aircraft were based on Malta. The war was economically advantageous to Malta, but the islands were almost wholly dependent upon British military spending, in one form or another. During the mid-1950s the airfields at Luqa, Ta'Qali and Hal Far underwent development and long range radar was installed, the food storage capacity was increased and improved fuel bunkering systems were provided for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

Britain's need for independent bases to support purely British interests drove the improvement action on Malta. However, by the mid-1960s the Ta'Qali and Hal Far were no longer operational and only Luqa remained in use. This was a result of the critical 1957 British defense review, the start of the British withdrawal.

As their economic conditions have worsened, the British have been forced to continually withdraw from colonies and sovereign base areas. In 1975 the Statement on Defense Estimates made official the British extraction from portions of the Mediterranean to include Malta.

On March 26, 1972 Malta and the United Kingdom signed a new bilateral agreement governing the use of defense facilities in Malta. The pact replaced an earlier (1964) defense agreement between the two countries which Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff had demanded be renegotiated. The old agreement limited the defense facilities use to strictly United Kingdom forces. The present agreement, which runs

for seven years, grants the United Kingdom the right to station armed forces and associated British personnel in Malta. An important change is that it allows the use of the facilities for defense purposes of the United Kingdom and NATO. It also provides that the government of Malta will not permit forces of any party to the Warsaw Pact to be allowed use of any Maltese facilities. In return, the United Kingdom and certain NATO allies pay Malta a total of 36.4 million US dollars each year. The US share of this payment is 9.5 million US dollars per year. It should be noted that this does not permit US unilateral use of any facilities.

At this point it may be well to point out those treaties which are multilateral to which Malta and the US are signatories:

1. International Air Services Transit Agreement, 1944.
2. Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, 1963.
3. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1968.
4. 1931 Convention and 1948 Protocol on Narcotic Drugs.
5. Convention on the Continental Shelf, 1958.
6. Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof, 1971.

During initial negotiations to renew the 1972 Malta-UK Defense Treaty the Maltese seemed to want the UK and NATO to stay in the country, but raised the price for doing so to an unacceptable level. Now the process of British and NATO withdrawal from Malta is nearing completion. In July 1977 Flag Officer, Malta terminated his duties

as NATO's COMEDSOUEAST. The Nimrod Maritime Patrol Aircraft formerly based at Malta are no longer declared to NATO and their withdrawal was completed in December 1977. The Canberra reconnaissance aircraft may remain as late as the end of this year (1978). The UK/Malta agreement expires in March 1979 and British presence will then end. At the same time, extensive financial support from NATO (\$35 million annually) and the UK (15 million pounds annually plus about the same amount in wages, etc.) will come to an end, presenting the Maltese with a number of problems.

Prime Minister Mintoff has been concentrating his efforts on devising a formula to protect Maltese interests following departure of the British and the end of the NATO subsidy. He is promoting the concept of a neutral Malta guaranteed by neighboring regional countries, including Libya and Algeria. This concept as currently understood would continue to exclude either a US or a Soviet military presence in Malta. Mintoff has made approaches to Italy, France, Spain, West Germany, the European economic community and Libya as alternate aid sources.

A problem not yet solved with regard to the British withdrawal is an agreement on property disposal. A price for the British investment in the bases is a problem. Several sources indicate that the UK may just give the property and facilities to the Maltese, especially in view of Malta's poor economic situation.

At the present time, spring 1978, there is a Royal Marine Company Group, some Army elements, and minor administrative units present and they will remain during the rundown and withdrawal period, which will

be completed by 31 March 1979. Number 41 Commando Group will be run down between 1977 and 1979, then disband. The Naval facilities are also being reduced in preparation for the end of the Military Facilities Agreement. CENTO-assigned Canberras and Nimrods will also be withdrawn by 1979.

Prime Minister Mintoff is unpredictable concerning what he is trying to do with Malta. There will be a definite adverse economic impact to Malta when the UK leaves. At present, however, what can be done to make up for that loss is not at all apparent.

Strong opposition exists to Mintoff but until recently there has not been a strong leader of that opposition. It appears that conditions favorable to the British NATO presence would exist if an effective opposition could emerge. The current opposition leader is Fenech Adami, and his political fortunes should be followed. The UK pullout may be a causitive factor in the rise of the opposition due to the harsh economic impact of loss of revenue and jobs. Malta's current middle road position is that no major power may use her ports or air bases, but she may be forced to change this stand.

Neighboring nations also manage to exert influence in varying degrees. Libya is known for her ability to promise much and deliver little. Signatures on a contract mean nothing. It looks as though the Maltese understand that and will not bank too heavily on Libya to solve their economic problems. Italy does have a hand in Malta's economic affairs and could affect the outcome of the Maltese position. Malta has purchased Italian firms and has a regular economic interchange with Italy. However, Italy has refused Malta's request to

guarantee Maltese neutrality. Italy and Libya do not see eye to eye and Malta may be playing one against the other. It should be noted that the Roman Catholic religion has a very strong hold in Malta.

Agents of the Peoples Republic of China are in Malta, and this presents an interesting situation. No one has been able to explain the Chinese interest in a little island in the middle of the Mediterranean, other than to play against Russia. China is very keen to keep Russia out. Three weeks after Dom Mintoff signed the 1972 Defense Facilities Agreement he visited the Peoples Republic of China. He arranged for a 17 million Maltese pound interest free six-year loan. The loan was given as 10 percent cash, with the remainder in development projects, equipment, technical assistance and funding local costs. Repayment is to be made in Maltese commodity exports to China beginning in 1984. China is building two dry docks in Valletta and other shipyard development work, and has also established a candy factory on Malta. Chinese influence is strong in Albania, and the proximity of Malta may account for her interest there.

An area referred to as South Port is where NATO fuel is stored, and where the Chinese are developing increased port facilities. This is in the Marsaxlokk Harbour. It is this area that Mintoff wants to expand to be able to reload from large ships to smaller ones. This will help Malta's economic situation by expanding her use of the seas for additional income. It could also have some military significance in the event of conflict in the Mediterranean.

Initially it should be pointed out that there is a difference of opinion as to Malta's value depending on which branch of service is

queried. To the Army and Air Force the value is little. The Navy holds another view. From a national viewpoint, Italy is prepared to extend her Navy into areas south of Malta to fill the void that will be left when the UK pulls out.

A study of the value of Malta to NATO and to the Soviets was made by CINCSOUTH and COMNAVSOUTH in the spring of 1976. This study led to the following view of Malta's usefulness: To NATO in peacetime the value is marginal. Although the bunkering facilities and south looking radar are important, alternate facilities are available elsewhere.

To NATO in wartime, the bases are primarily useful as an additional base for maritime and aerial surveillance. However, these bases would be an important asset to the Soviets in peacetime and some value in the event of war. They would significantly increase Soviet capability to support naval deployments, would provide a facility for long range maritime air patrols, and would have great political and psychological impact on Mediterranean nations. To the Soviets in wartime their value would be minimal without extensive hardening of facilities and stockpiling of supplies.

In short, it is of more importance to NATO to deny the Soviets the use of Malta, even in peacetime, than to have access to the facilities for NATO use. The present situation, therefore, is not too bad from a NATO viewpoint. Should it be economically and politically feasible for NATO to use Maltese facilities to the exclusion of the Soviets, the potential uses of most value would be Maritime patrol aircraft basing facilities, access to POL, access to dockyards,

and retention of the air defense radar capability. An improved and mobile radar system would be of particular value to increase coverage of the threat from the south posed by the potential for Soviet use of African naval bases.

AFSOUTH staff and subordinate headquarters continue to monitor the Maltese situation; however, NATO sources of information are now nearly nonexistent and reliance must increasingly be placed on national reports.

The US use of bases on Malta is not now permitted. The current Malta treaty with the UK specifically prohibits the use of the bases and ports by any other nation. The Maltese, under Mintoff, will not cater to any major power in their effort to run a neutralist course. Hence, the US cannot plan to use bases in Malta for any unilateral action. However, after 31 March 1979 the climate may well change as the economic conditions are altered by the UK withdrawal. Should it become politically feasible for the US to pursue basing agreements with Malta, the potential uses of the bases there to project US power into the Middle East could be a very important consideration. In an economic crisis situation the Maltese may seriously consider a hard cash offer by the Soviets, and that must be countered. Not only would basing rights in Malta be of great military significance, but the political-psychological impact of US presence on Malta would be of tremendous value in regards to our relations with other Mediterranean nations.

The US needs bilateral agreements for bases from which to support unilateral action in contingencies in the Mediterranean and Middle



East. The US cannot rely on any one nation, such as Italy, or Spain for its ability to be able to project military power and logistical support in contingency situations.

## CHAPTER IV

### CYPRUS

The island of Cyprus is located in the eastern Mediterranean, south of Turkey and west of Syria. From Anamur, Turkey, the nearest point of Cyprus is approximately 60 miles (100 km) and from Latakia, Syria about the same. The area of Cyprus, 3,572 miles<sup>2</sup> (9,251 km<sup>2</sup>), is about the same as the state of Connecticut. Nearly half (47 percent) the land is arable and under permanent crops. Of the remainder, 18 percent is forested, 10 percent is meadows and pasture and 25 percent waste, urban and other. Excluding the tail, the island is about 90 miles from west to east and 50 miles north to south. The six large bays of the coastline provide little shelter and there are no inlets or natural harbors. Nature's forgetfulness in this vital matter is a serious handicap to Cyprus, for at Famagusta, where is found the one harbor of any consequence, there is no accommodation for ships above 9,000 tons of light draught.

Across the northern half of the island, from Famagusta Bay on the east to Morphou Bay on the west, extends a great plain called the Mesaoria, and in its center is Nicosia, the capitol. On the north, this plain is cut off from the sea by the Kyrenia Range that extends for nearly a hundred miles across the northern length of the island. Between the Kyrenia Range and the sea on the north lies a strip of highly fertile, well watered land.

The whole southern half of Cyprus consists of a confusion of steep-sided mountain ridges which range from foothills rising from

the Messaoria to the snow-covered Mt. Troodos at 6,404 feet above sea level. So broken and tangled is the formation that at first examination of a map the main watershed is not readily apparent.

Between the Kyrenia Range and the Troodos Mountains, parallel and close to one another run the two chief rivers, the Pedias and Yalias. To call these rivers, though, is perhaps an exaggeration, for neither is navigable in any part of its course in dry weather. Typically, the two rivers overflow during the rainy season and the waters rush off toward Famagusta Bay and for the most part are absorbed in the marshes just west of Famagusta. In recent history, however, a system of dams and reservoirs have been constructed which collect this runoff.

The first-time traveler entering the island at Famagusta or Limassol and traveling overland to Nicosia will have the immediate impression that the island is treeless and indeed today is. However, there is ample evidence to indicate that in past centuries the Messaoria was heavily forested. It is to the credit of the British that during the time the island was a Crown Colony this trend was stabilized and then reversed, for today the forests are returning.

By most modern world standards, Cyprus is a poor nation. The 1975 GNP was \$710.8 million, or \$1,090 per capita. The real growth rate in 1975 was -20 percent. The main output is agricultural products, principally vine products, citrus, potatoes and vegetables. A great deal of the agricultural output is exported but food shortages do exist in grain, dairy products, meat and fish. The industrial base is composed mostly of mining for copper, iron and asbestos, most

of which is exported. The manufacturing capability is limited to food, beverages and footwear. Nearly all the manufactured goods are consumed internally. Because of the present situation on Cyprus it is extremely difficult to determine precise dollar figures for imports versus exports. Using very gross figures, however, it is readily apparent that Cyprus has an unfavorable balance of trade, which may be as bad as 2:1.

The geographic position of Cyprus would suggest that its possession is vital in any struggle for power or control of communications in the Levant. And for more than three thousand years Cyprus has indeed been an object of strife between contending powers of the Near East: Egypt and the empires of Asia Minor and Greece as well as their challengers from outside.

Sometimes the challenge was from the east but more often was from the west. Even so, the strategic usefulness of Cyprus has on the whole been marginal. Throughout most of Near Eastern history, the main movements of armies and civilizations have been on the mainland of Asia Minor and the Levant. Cyprus has sometimes been an imperial outpost or redoubt, but it has more usually been a sanctuary or last ditch of a declining empire rather than the springboard for new conquests. This was true of the Crusaders, of the Venetians, and now the British.

The Turks conquered Cyprus in the 16th century but as the Ottoman Empire moved into the 19th century the decline had begun. For some years Russia had been encroaching on Ottoman territories so that Turkey engaged Great Britain to join the Sultan in a military defense

of those territories. On 4 June 1878, a convention of defensive allegiance between Great Britain and Turkey was signed at Constantinople. In return the Sultan consented to assign the island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England. The British intent was to forward base ships and troops at Cyprus to fulfill the terms of the defensive alliance against Russia.

The British occupation of Cyprus lasted from 1878 until 1914 when Turkey entered World War I against Britain and her allies. Needless to say, Cyprus was automatically annexed to the British Crown and in 1925 was given status of a Crown Colony under a governor.

Both Greek and Turk Cypriot alike welcomed the British. But this time the Greek Cypriots were not going to be content to sit back and do the bidding of their new masters, for the seeds of enosis—union with Greece—had been sown. Indeed, the hope was that British occupation would be a stepping stone to enosis as it had been with the Ionian Islands. On the occasion of the arrival of the High Commissioner, Sir Garnet Wolseley, on 30 July 1878, Bishop Cyprianos replied, "We accept the change of Government inasmuch as we trust that Great Britain will help Cyprus, as it did the Ionian Islands, to be united with Mother Greece, with which it is naturally connected." This was the desire of the Greeks on the island, who were in the majority. The minority Turks had other ideas.

From the beginning, British rule was a source of frustration, and ineffective. The first Constitution of 1882 set up a legislative council composed of six official members and 12 elected members. Nine of the latter were Greeks, three were Turks. This division

corresponded to the proportions of the population. Since Britain believed that the sole aim of her Greek subjects in Cyprus was the replacement of British by Greek rule in the form of union with Greece, it was not uncommon for the six official members of the legislative council to form a block with the Turkish representatives and negate the vote of the Greek representatives. When this happened, the high commissioner could then exercise a veto over the Greeks. This power pattern became a permanent feature of the administration of Cyprus, even when the proportions of the population changed more heavily in favor of the Greeks. It became a source of intense frustration to the Greek Cypriots and served to widen the gulf, politically, between them and the Turkish Cypriots. In effect, under the British the Greek Cypriots had freedom to speak, but not to act politically.

While Cyprus undoubtedly owed Britain its entry into the modern world, large scale and intensive development did not begin until very late; in fact, only towards the end of the 1930s. The first 50 years of British rule were, therefore, a period of very slow progress, even if not of decline and stagnation. The reasons for this delay are partly to be found in the restrictions imposed on the administration, which found itself constantly hammed in by political and departmental decisions taken in London. Until 1914 the uncertainty about the status of the island discouraged any large scale investment.

Finally, in the 1930s, things began to happen; roads were built, water projects were completed, reforestation was begun, mechanization was introduced to farming, as well as fertilizers and insecticides.

If Cyprus under the British flag had escaped the terrors as well as the glories of the great Greco-Turkish struggle, it was not by choice of the Greek Cypriots. Though welcoming the arrival of the British in 1878 as a release from Turkish rule, they had never ceased to make plain their desire for enosis. Although the intensity of the agitation for enosis varied during the period of British rule, scarcely a year passed without at least a memorandum, resolution or manifesto demanding union with Greece and, additionally or alternatively, self-government by majority rule. Sometimes there were demonstrations, occasionally riots; in 1931 there was a minor uprising; and finally, from 1955 to 1959, there was a major rebellion. Almost invariably, a Greek Cypriot declaration in favor of enosis would be matched by a protest from the Turkish Cypriots, asking to remain under British rule or for the island to return to Turkish sovereignty. The struggles between Greeks and Turks outside Cyprus intensified the racial-religious division among Cypriots. But it must be admitted that the British government on the whole showed itself more ready to make use of this division rather than to take any determined steps to overcome it.

The decade of the 1950s was an extremely volatile time for Cyprus. It was during this time that Archbishop Makarios came on the scene; it was a time of riot, insurrection, terrorism, bloody revolt and three years of very difficult negotiation which culminated in the Treaty on Cyprus under which Cyprus became a republic on the 16th of August 1960. Under the terms of the treaty, Britain retained two sovereign base areas on the Greek portion of the island which they still have today.

By the fall of 1963 it was obvious that the new Constitution had proved basically unworkable and by its very nature caused the two communities to work against each other. Independence made Cyprus a state but not a nation, for mistrust and nationalism prevailed. This was all borne out by a constitutional crisis which occurred in late 1963 that led to a great deal of strife. So much in fact that a UN force was sent in to restore and maintain peace.

In more recent times, 1974, a military coup was attempted by several Greek Army officers which caused Turkey to send troops to the island and once again the UN Force was needed.

The divisions on Cyprus have changed little; technically an independent nation but divided economically, ethnically, politically, militarily and territorially. The old hatreds resulting from 300 years rule by Turkey (Ottoman Empire), 100 years of Turkish oppression by the Greek majority, and conflicts between Greece and Turkey are still very much in evidence. Because of political fortunes, however, the old cry of "enosis" seems to have disappeared.

The position of the Greek government is for an independent nation, a consolidated government of relative equality but with land areas divided according to ethnic percentages. Although the Turks disagree with some aspects of this proposal, their main fear is that such a nation so near their mainland might come under Communist control.

Since the Turkish invasion of 1974, the most desirable 38 percent of the island is under control of 18 percent of the people. The Greek population is controlled by the Greek Cypriot government with little interference from Athens. The Turkish Cypriot government on the other hand is virtually under total control of Ankara.



Attempts continue to be made to find a workable solution but the large number of vested interests makes the endeavor highly complex and extremely difficult. Not only are Greece and Turkey involved but also NATO, UK, US and the United Nations.

Strategically, Cyprus is important, particularly when one looks east. King Richard discovered its significance purely by accident, but used it for awhile as a forward base for the third Crusade. When Great Britain took over administration of the island in 1870, it was in response to a mutual defense pact with Turkey against a Russian threat that allowed British troops to be stationed on Cyprus.

It is now over one hundred years since Cyprus has played a strategically important role for other than planning purposes. If, however, one envisions any one of several possible NATO scenarios, Cyprus immediately becomes important, partly because it is not in NATO and partly because it has a potential to play a leading role in a NATO battle for the eastern Mediterranean.

Looking outside of NATO other possibilities also exist, particularly in the volatile mid-east. In viewing such a scenario, the two UK base areas immediately assume a certain degree of attractiveness, not for maritime purposes but because of the land area involved (nearly 100 square miles) including a very large airfield at Akroteri. However, there is a provision in the treaty of 1960 which in essence prohibits the United Kingdom from allowing use of the sovereign base areas by another nation without first obtaining permission of the Cypriot government.

In the event of a NATO war one might conjure up a scenario wherein NATO presence at the sovereign base areas might be welcomed. But, one must remember, the two sovereign base areas are not NATO bases, nor are there currently any NATO war plans which presuppose the use of those areas.

In the non-NATO realm, imagination would yield situations in the Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Persian Gulf areas where forces from western nations might be required to preserve peace or advance national interests. What, then, of the sovereign base areas on Cyprus? Would they be available for forward basing? Even with a very precise scenario, resolution of that question is difficult but the ultimate answer in most cases would probably be "no." Cyprus wants no part of US military assistance to Israel; in fact, they are sympathetic to the Arab cause in the Sinai and Lebanon and have ties to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

It is difficult to imagine a situation in the Middle East or Persian Gulf area that would require US unilateral military actions. Since so many other nations also have vital interests in that area the probability is that any such action would be joint venture. In any case, the mood of the Cypriot government being what it is, contingency planning by any nation other than the UK, which presupposes use of Cyprus, is seriously unrealistic.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The loss of British bases in the Mediterranean will not impact on NATO's southern flank to any great degree. Providing that the existing facilities do not fall into Soviet hands and NATO retains its facilities in Italy, the Southern Flank of NATO will be as defensible without the use of bases on Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus.

However, certain implications should be noted. British access to the existing bases does make the job of controlling the Mediterranean easier than if they were not there. Also, a possibility exists that further British review of their contribution to the Southern Flank may find them drawing down on the personnel from the UK that now help staff Allied Forces South, particularly NAVSOUTH. Logic indicates that if Britain has no bases in the Mediterranean her total view of that region could change. According to officials at AFSOUTH, the US would have a difficult time holding together a functional staff if the UK pulls her personnel out. The presence of British personnel acts as a stabilizer in the relationship of all the allies in AFSOUTH because of the stability and credibility these persons have established over the years. Relations between some of our Allies in the Mediterranean are unstable, to put it mildly.

An AP release in the newspaper, Daily America, on 13 April 1978 indicates that Secretary of Defense Brown, during a trip to Europe, stated that the US will not abandon the NATO flanks in the years ahead. This was an especially important statement to our South Flank allies in view of the current uncertainties in that region.

It should be noted by senior DOD and DA commanders that the US cannot project power into the Mediterranean by using the present British bases. Also, for unilateral action, unless it specifically involves one of our NATO allies, the US will not be able to use any bases in the Mediterranean. The only immediate means available for the projection of our forces in a unilateral situation is from the 6th Fleet at sea. This severely constrains the size and type of forces that could be employed.

The most important future effort in regard to Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus is to deny their use by any hostile power. The best way to accomplish this is through constant monitoring of the political situation and appropriate support of the governing bodies of Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus. Keeping the balance among all the Mediterranean countries may become more difficult with the advent of the 200-mile territorial limits. This factor could seriously affect an already unstable relationship between many of our allies in this critical region.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The strongest possible recommendation is made that the Department of Defense convince the President, Congress, and the Department of State of the criticality of the situation in the Mediterranean in regard to our lack of basing facilities for unilateral contingencies, especially the Middle East. The US should begin now the political negotiations necessary to secure basing rights in all of the Mediterranean nations which are our allies. At the time of crisis it is too

late to begin what will assuredly be a lengthy process. The most important of all could well be the very strategically located island of Malta as it faces an uncertain economic future, and the delicate feat of remaining neutral. The US must be prepared to take advantage of any political change of climate in Malta that could bring her more to our side.

A similar recommendation exists for Cyprus, though the political situation there is entirely different. The US must encourage the British to remain on Cyprus, even at the expense of financial aid to do so. Should that fail, we must enter into political negotiations in an attempt to secure base rights there.

In order to assure strategic flexibility, the US cannot neglect the pursuit of base rights for unilateral actions in the countries of Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. The web is woven in a very complex manner and the military and political elements of our government must keep this in mind as they work together to reach viable solutions for our strategic interests in the Mediterranean region.

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